

CHILD NUTRITION (CN) LABELS AND PRODUCT FACT SHEETS

Purchasing food for a child nutrition program can sometimes be a challenge. Not only do buyers have to plan menus that meet federal meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards but the foods they purchase must also provide quality and value and at the same time be appealing to children. Buyers must also be able to identify the contribution that a food or food product makes towards meeting meal pattern requirements. The challenge arises when buyers purchase convenience food products that are either breaded, battered, provide a combination of foods or contain a mixture of ingredients because it is difficult to determine these products' contribution to the meal pattern.

CN Labels found on certain food products, as well as Product Fact Sheets, can be used by buyers to verify the meal pattern contributions of a convenience food. The chart below defines both and summarizes their differences.

The following comparison chart summarizes the major differences between a Child Nutrition (CN) Label and a Product Fact Sheet.

COMPARISON CHART

	<u>CHILD NUTRITION LABELS</u>	<u>PRODUCT FACT SHEETS</u>
DESCRIPTION	Product label, which contains a statement that clearly identifies the meal pattern contribution of the product.	Signed statement, by the manufacturer's president, that identifies the contribution that the food makes towards meeting meal pattern requirements.
STANDARD INFORMATION IS REQUIRED	Yes – see page 2	No
REVIEWED AND MONITORED BY THE USDA	Yes	No
CARRIES A USDA GUARANTEE	Yes - provides a warranty	No
PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	Each CN labeled product is assigned its own distinct six-digit identification number.	The same product identification number may be used for many different products.

CHILD NUTRITION (CN) LABELS

Q: What is a CN label?

A: A CN label is a product label which contains a statement that clearly identifies the contribution that product makes towards the CN meal pattern requirements.

Q: Who reviews and monitors CN labels for meat and poultry products?

A: The CN labeling Program is administered by Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), a section of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), in cooperation with the following agencies:

- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Agricultural Marketing Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

The program is operated by FNS directly with commercial food processing firms.

Q: Does a CN labeled product carry a USDA guarantee?

A: Yes.

- A CN labeled product provides a warranty against audit claims, if used according to the manufacturer's directions.
- A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a product toward the meal pattern requirement.

Q: What standard information appears on a CN label?

A: A CN label will always contain the following:

- The CN logo, which is a distinct border.
- The meal pattern contribution statement.
- A 6-digit product identification number.
- USDA/FNS authorization.
- The month and year of approval.

Q: How can you identify and track a product with a CN label?

A: All approved CN labels have a six-digit identification number printed inside the CN-logo in the upper right hand corner. Each CN labeled product is assigned its own distinct number. No two products should ever have the same number.

CN LABEL STATEMENT – EXAMPLE

The CN Label statement identifies the contribution that a product makes towards meeting child nutrition meal pattern requirements. For example, a convenience main entrée may contribute to one or more of the following meal components:

- Meat/meat alternate
- Breads/grains
- Fruits/vegetables

CN labels on juice drinks and juice drink products will specify their contribution to the fruit/vegetable component.

The sample CN label printed below identifies the contribution that four breaded fish nuggets make towards meeting meal pattern requirements in CN programs

	CN		020202
CN	Four 1.00 oz. fish nuggets with vegetable protein product provides 2.00 oz. equivalent meat/meat alternate and 1.75 servings of bread alternate for Child Nutrition Meal Pattern Requirements. (Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Consumer Service, USDA 04-98).	CN	
	CN		

PRODUCT FACT SHEETS

Q: What is a product fact sheet?

A: A product fact sheet is advertising literature provided by the company that contains varied information about one or more of the company's products.

Q: Who reviews and monitors product fact sheets?

A: Product fact sheets are written, designed and distributed by the individual manufacturer. In many instances, an officer of the company will sign these sheets to attest to the printed information. Company officials should make sure that the product label and production records match the description of the product on the fact sheet. The United States Department of Agriculture does not monitor these fact sheets for compliance with the product formulation or their stated contribution to CN meal pattern requirements.

Q: Does a product fact sheet that claims a meal pattern contribution carry a USDA guarantee?

A: No.

Q: What information appears on a meat or poultry fact sheet?

A: There is no standard information that must appear on a fact sheet; these decisions are left to the individual company. However, the following information does appear on many fact sheets:

- Company name
- Product(s) name(s)
- Product(s) description
- Cooked portion size
- Case pack
- Preparation instructions
- Nutrient analysis
- Contribution toward the USDA meal pattern requirements
- Company official's signature

Q: What information should be on a meat or poultry fact sheet in order to determine the product's contribution toward the meal pattern?

A: The following information should be included:

- Weight of raw portion
- Percent of raw meat or poultry
- Percent fat of raw meat
- Percent dry vegetable protein product (VPP) if product contains VPP
- Percent protein of the VPP (on an as purchased basis)
- Certification that the vegetable protein used meets USDA-FNS requirements.

Q: How can a buyer verify the accuracy of the information on a fact sheet?

A: There is no way to verify this information.

Q: How can you identify and track a product referred to in a fact sheet?

A: Many manufacturers assign internal code numbers to their products to help identify and track them. The same code numbers may be assigned to many different products. There is not necessarily one code number to identify one product. Each company has its own identification numbering system. Be sure to ask the company representative to explain their system.

PRODUCT FACT SHEET - EXAMPLE

Dandy Chicken Products 1-888-888-8888

PRODUCT NAME _____ Cooked Breaded Chicken Breast Strips

PRODUCT CODE _____ 5841

MEAT USED IN PRODUCT _____ Chicken

Weights listed below are per individual piece:

TOTAL WEIGHT OF UNCOOKED PROCESSED PRODUCT: _____ 1.1892 oz.

WEIGHT OF RAW MEAT: _____ 0.7520 oz.

PERCENT OF FAT OF RAW MEAT USED: _____ less than 30%

(WEIGHT OF DRY VPP): _____ N/A

(WEIGHT OF HYDRATED VPP): _____ N/A

(WEIGHT OF RAW MEAT & HYDRATED VPP): _____ N/A

WEIGHT OF ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS:
(Spices, etc.) _____ 0.1480 oz.

WEIGHT OF BREAD/BREAD ALTERNATE: _____ 0.3092 oz

WEIGHT (STATED) OF PRECOOKED PRODUCT: _____ 1.1000 oz.

WEIGHT OF PRECOOKED MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE: _____ 0.5264 oz.

I certify, to the best of my knowledge that 4 pieces of the above product contains 2 oz. of cooked meat/meat alternate when prepared according to directions.

I further certify the vegetable protein product (VPP) used in this product is on the FNS approved list, is hydrated properly, and that the hydrated VPP is not more than 30% by weight of the meat and hydrated VPP.

Slight variations in piece weights is possible, due to normal process variations.

BY: _____

DATE: _____

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